Special Issue for
2004 Annual Conference of
IS/IT Issues in Asia-Pacific

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This special section is devoted to the papers selected from the First International Symposium of IS/IT in Asia-Pacific (ISAP 2004), organized by the academic IS association (AIS-SIG-ISAP: http://sigs.aisnet.org/SIGISAP/) held in conjunction with ICIS 2004 in Washington, DC, in December 2004. As the first international symposium dedicated to the IS/IT issues in the Asia-Pacific region, the conference attracted over 60 submissions from authors in many regions and countries in the Pacific rim, including Australia, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, USA, China, and Japan. Of those submissions, 25 papers were selected for presentation at the conference. After the conference, selected authors were invited to submit extended versions of their papers for this special section. After two rounds of double-blinded reviews, two research articles and one research note were accepted. We are honored to serve as the guest editors for this special section to present these interesting research papers to the readers of the Journal of Global Information Management. We want to use this opportunity to thank the dedication and commitment of the ISAP conference organizers, track and session chairs, authors, and reviewers who ensured the success of the conference. We are also grateful to Dr. Felix Tan, Editor-in-Chief, for allocating the special section in this highly respected global IS journal.

Over the last three decades, the Asia-Pacific region has experienced phenomenal economic growth and development largely driven by the wide spread use of information technology (IT), especially the Internet spawn technologies and applications. Singapore and Japan are the leading innovators and new product development centers of the global digital economy; China and India are the IT and high-tech outsourcing capitals of the world; and Taiwan is the leading manufacturer and supplier of semi-conductor components and micro-processors. There is no doubt that the story of the world’s economy in the 21st century is the story of IT in the Asia-Pacific region. On the other hand, the effective use and management of IT in enterprises and organizations in the region still pose tremendous challenges to practitioners and academics due to the unique cultural, politi-
cal, and historical characteristics of this region. Many socio-political constraints, such as the relatively cheap labor supply, the abundance of young and well-educated high-tech workforce, the social welfare systems in many countries, the consensus-based and relationship-centric management style, and the significant political and regulatory interference to business and management practices, often render the IT management theories and practices originated in the developed countries, especially these based on the western social and political value systems, less potent and sometimes inapplicable (Liang et al., 2004; Quan et al., 2005). Thus, while it is important to utilize the knowledge accumulated and lessons learned in the last three decades of IS research and practices mainly in the developed western countries, IS scholars in the Asia-Pacific region and those who are interested in the region are entrusted to develop IS/IT theories and practices in the context of this unique part of the world economy.

With that spirit, we are pleased to present three interesting studies in this special section. The research article by Ke and Wei describes a comparative case study of two Chinese companies on how organizational learning impacted the implementation outcomes of enterprise systems (ES). Using the theory of organizational learning as guidance, the authors find that successful outcomes depend on the attitude and vision of the top management toward IT, a culture of openness, mutual trust, a self-critical disposition, and extensive knowledge overlap and information exchange among managers. These findings provide valuable content-specific insights for better management practices when dealing with ES implementation issues in China and other developing Asia-Pacific countries.

The other two research articles address some important issues in the emerging field of e-government. While e-government has been widely practiced in many developed countries, especially in the US, e-government research is still in its infancy. Questions regarding the strategies and critical success factors for e-government implementations, especially in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region, are critical to both practitioners and scholars. Chen et al. propose a framework that highlights the critical success factors (CSF) in implementing e-government initiatives, including the national infrastructure, cultural, and society factors. The authors then conducted a comparative case study utilizing this framework to compare e-government implementations in USA and China. This framework could serve as a strategic planning tool for governments in the Asia-Pacific region for their future e-government endeavors.

The research article by the authors examines the question why the level of e-government development varies from country to country via the lens of the theory of economic growth and development. Using secondary data from the United Nations, the authors analyzed the effect of income level, development status, and region on the level e-government development as measured by the Web Measure Index (WMI), an indicator of the capabilities of governmental Web sites. Siau and Long find that significant variances exist between and within
different groups of countries and suggest that e-government should not be studied as if it is the same for all countries/regions. The authors caution that successful experience of e-government implementation in a developed country may not be directly applicable to a developing country without careful consideration and adaptation.

REFERENCES


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